



Poultry tests negative in DATCP investigation

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MADISON – All initial and follow-up test results are negative in a recently concluded investigation into an antibody detection of low pathogenic H5 avian influenza on a Wisconsin pheasant farm. Animal health officials at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) began testing after a routine inspection at the farm indicated some birds had developed antibodies to the disease indicating possible exposure.

“After being notified that birds had tested positive for antibody on a blood test, we undertook an extensive search for the virus by testing 111 flocks near the initial property, most of which were small backyard flocks,” said Dr. Paul McGraw, Wisconsin State Veterinarian. There was never any risk to public health or food safety and the tests results show no signs of the virus itself.

DATCP veterinarians and inspectors contacted poultry owners within a 7 mile radius of the first identified property to schedule testing utilizing livestock premises registration and poultry sales records. All types of poultry on each property were swabbed for the virus and submitted for testing during the first two weeks of July. Follow-up test samples were collected from the same birds two weeks later.

“Tests from both rounds of sampling have been negative for the virus. The birds first tested could have been exposed to the virus from wild fowl, which may have caused the positive antibody blood test, but the active virus was never found,” McGraw said.

DATCP credits its mandatory premises registration system for helping to identify poultry owners within the 7 mile radius quickly and efficiently. The premises registration system requires that livestock owners register their premises and identify the species of livestock on their property for situations like this.

“When disease appears on a farm, we need to know where the animals are and be able to manage the process easily. If we had to walk door-to-door, we would not have had such a quick and successful close to this investigation,” McGraw said.

Though the investigation is over and tests are negative, some countries have opted to impose trade restrictions on Wisconsin poultry products. DATCP is working with our federal partners to get the restrictions lifted as soon as possible.

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